UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/845,396	04/30/2001	Wayne L. Randell	32423/82536	2724

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EXAMINER
LIVERSEDGE, JENNIFER L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3684	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

PTOL-90A (Rev. 04/07)

	Application No.	Applicant(s)
Office Action Summary	09/845,396	RANDELL ET AL.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**	
	JENNIFER LIVERSEDGE	3684	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on <u>10/23/09 & 10/28/09</u>.

2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.   2b) ☒ This action is non-final.

3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) ☒ Claim(s) <u>117-128</u> is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) ☒ Claim(s) <u>117-128</u> is/are rejected.

7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a) ☐ All   b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:

      1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

      3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

This Office Action is responsive to Applicant's amendment and request for

reconsideration of application 09/845,396 filed on October 23, 2009 and October 28,

2009.

The amendment contains previously presented claims: 117-127.

The amendment contains new claim: 128.

Claims 1-116 have been canceled.

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set

forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this

application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set

forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action

has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on October

23, 2009 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set
> forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and
> the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the
> invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.
> Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham* **v.** *John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148

USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining

obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1.   Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2.   Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3.   Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4.   Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating
      obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 117-127 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

US Patent 7,206,768 B1 to deGroeve et al. (further referred to as deGroeve), and

further in view of US Patent 6,363,421 B2 to Barker et al. (further referred to as Barker).

Regarding claims 117-120 and 122-127, deGroeve discloses a process for online

invoice presentment and processing, and an apparatus (Figure 1) comprising:

Generating at a biller entity a database record, the database record containing a

plurality of data elements related to an invoice for a service rendered to a customer

entity, the data elements including: an invoice number data element; amount billed data

element; date of invoice data element; invoice approval status data element; invoice

payment authorization status data element (Figure 5; column 3, lines 45-55; column 4,

lines 5-12; column 13, lines 42-58; column 18, lines 45-67; column 19, lines 58-67;

column 24, lines 11-29; column 26, lines 18-22 and lines 39-67; column 27, lines 9-25;

column 35, lines 2067);

Electronically transmitting a plurality of the data elements from the database to a

remote computer unit associated with the customer entity (Figure 1; column 3, lines 45-

55; column 16, lines 49-53; column 17, lines 18-59; column 18, lines 4-7);

Receiving at the remote computer unit user credentials data supplied by a user

(column 19, line 58 – column 20, lines 7; column 35, lines 34-44);

Processing the data elements with the computer unit and rendering an image of

the invoice at a display of the computer unit to provide the user with a visual

representation of the invoice (Figures 5, 7; column 4, lines 5-60; column 23, line 65 –

column 24, line 42-53; column 25, lines 37-43);

Providing at the computer unit a dynamically adaptable user interface, wherein:

A selection of the first input option indicating that the user at the computer

unit has approved the invoice (Figures 7, 15A; column 1, line 61 – column 2, line

3; column 4, lines 25-38; column 4, line 47 – column 5, line 4; column 13, lines

46-58; column 19, lines 62-67; column 23, lines 50-54; column 27, lines 11-25;

column 35, lines 20-67); and

A selection of the second input option at the computer unit indicating that

the user has authorized payment of the invoice (Figures 7, 15A; column 1, line 61

– column 2, line 3; column 4, lines 25-38; column 4, line 47 – column 5, line 4;

column 13, lines 46-58; column 19, lines 62-67; column 23, lines 50-54; column

27, lines 11-25; column 35, lines 20-67); and

In response to selection by the user of the first input option, transmitting data

from the computer unit to the database to modify the invoice approval status data

element to indicate that the payment of the invoice has been approved (Figure 8;

column 26, lines 60-67; column 27, lines 11-17).

deGroeve does not disclose the user interface having at least two selectively

deactivatable input options, and selectively deactivating the first input option on the

basis of the user credentials data when the user credentials data indicates that the user

does not possess invoice approval privileges; the second input option on the bases of

the user credentials data when the user credentials data indicates that the user does

not possess payment authorization privileges; the second input option on the basis of

information in the invoice approval status data element, wherein the information in the

invoice approval status data element indicates that the invoice has not been approved;

However, deGroeve discloses where users are assigned particular privileges and

wherein users are permitted to carry out transactions only for which they have assigned

privileges (column 4, lines 47-60; column 13, lines 46-58; column 19, line 62 – column

20, line 7), wherein it is desirable to have one party first approve/confirm an invoice

before another party authorizes the invoice for payment (column 1, line 61 – column 2,

line 3; column 4, lines 33-35; column 27, line 23-25), and further that certain invoices

may be viewable only if certain processing steps have been performed on the invoice,

specifically that invoices may only be viewable if they have first been confirmed (column

6, lines 56-64).

Additionally, Barker discloses selectively deactivating options on the basis of

user credentials data (column 30, lines 45-55). It would have been obvious to one of

ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the invoice approval system

by multiple parties wherein users have predefined privilege credentials and wherein

invoices are approved in sequence of approve/confirm and then authorize for payment

as disclosed by deGroeve to adapt the selective deactivation of inputs on the basis of

user credential data as disclosed by Baker. The motivation would be that as deGroeve

provides an order to which invoice approval and authorization must occur, to use the

deactivation of inputs as disclosed by Baker such that a user could not act on an invoice

out of turn. deGroeve provides a means of preventing such out of turn authorization by

limiting the viewing of invoices to those that have been approved such that they are

ready for authorization. Providing the deactivation of an approval and/or authorization

button based on user credential data would achieve the same ends using similarly

known technology.

Regarding claims 121 and 128, deGroeve does not disclose wherein the user

credentials data conveys a password. However, Barker discloses wherein the user

credentials data conveys a password (column 8, lines 45-46). Given the combination of

deGroeve and Barker above, it would have been further obvious to one of ordinary skill

in the art at the time of the invention to have adapted the use of access control through

the use of passwords as disclosed by Barker, the motivation being that passwords are

commonly used for user identification and access control and would provide for an

efficient means of identifying a user authorized for various functions and where

deactivation of inputs may be required as disclosed by Barker.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed October 23, 2009 and October 28, 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that the combination of deGroeve and Barker fail to meet the limitations related to selectively deactivating options on the basis of user credentials and that the deactivation would not be necessary in the deGoeve disclosure. Examiner respectfully disagrees. As noted above, deGroeve discloses where users are assigned particular privileges and wherein users are permitted to carry out transactions only for which they have assigned privileges (column 4, lines 47-60; column 13, lines 46-58; column 19, line 62 – column 20, line 7), wherein it is desirable to have one party first approve/confirm an invoice before another party authorizes the invoice for payment (column 1, line 61 – column 2, line 3; column 4, lines 33-35; column 27, line 23-25), and further that certain invoices may be viewable only if certain processing steps have been performed on the invoice, specifically that invoices may only be viewable if they have first been confirmed (column 6, lines 56-64). Additionally, Barker discloses selectively deactivating options on the basis of user credentials data (column 30, lines 45-55).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the invoice approval system by multiple parties wherein users have predefined privilege credentials and wherein invoices are approved in sequence of approve/confirm and then authorize for payment as disclosed by deGroeve to adapt the selective deactivation of inputs on the basis of user credential data as disclosed by

Baker. The motivation would be that as deGroeve provides an order to which invoice

approval and authorization must occur, to use the deactivation of inputs as disclosed by

Baker such that a user could not act on an invoice out of turn. deGroeve provides a

means of preventing such out of turn authorization by limiting the viewing of invoices to

those that have been approved such that they are ready for authorization. Providing the

deactivation of an approval and/or authorization button based on user credential data as

disclosed by Barker would achieve the same ends using similarly known technology.

While Barker does not relate to the field of on-line invoice processing, Barker

does disclose the use of selectively deactivating options on the basis of user credentials

data. Thus, a known technique is being applied in a similar manner to achieve a similar

predictable result. deGroeve specifically is concerned about the order in which invoices

are approved and granting permission such that the approval and authorization occur in

order. It would be obvious to implement the control feature of Barker to ensure that this

order is maintained.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Jennifer

Liversedge whose telephone number is 571-272-3167. The examiner can normally be

reached on Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 5 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Kambiz Abdi can be reached at 571-272-6702. The fax number for the

organization where the application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the

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published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR.

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For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should

you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic

Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Jennifer Liversedge/

Examiner, Art Unit 3684